

Morrow Mountain State Park; scenic lakes and rivers including Badin, High Rock, and Tuckertown Lakes, and the Uwharrie, Yadkin, and Pee Dee Rivers; as well as nearby attractions, including the North Carolina Zoological Park and the Seagrove area potteries. This tourism is vitally important to this region of the State.

- (2) The federal government recognized the natural abundance and cultural heritage of this region of North Carolina by purchasing tens of thousands of acres of land and designating it the Uwharrie Reservation during the Great Depression. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed these lands the Uwharrie National Forest.
- (3) The same beauty and natural abundance that is valued by North Carolina residents, tourists, and the federal government is being adversely affected by natural asset uses that are negatively impacting the value and public's enjoyment of the important regional assets of the region.
- (4) The region is subject to profound economic challenges and pressures due to a loss of manufacturing and industrial activities in recent years. Local governments face challenges as they adapt to new and difficult changes to the landscape.

(c) Purpose. – It is the purpose of this Chapter to encourage quality growth and development while preserving the natural resources of the Uwharrie region of North Carolina.

"§ 153C-2. Definitions.

The following definitions apply in this Article:

- (1) Commission. – The Uwharrie Resources Commission created by this Chapter.
- (2) Important regional resources. – The natural and cultural resources of the Uwharrie region of North Carolina, including, but not limited to: State and federal public lands; forestland; vistas; streams, rivers, and lakes; wildlife habitat; and economic, recreational, historical, and archeological resources.
- (3) Department. – The Department of Commerce.
- (4) Uwharrie region of North Carolina. – The area encompassed by the counties of Davidson, Davie, Montgomery, Rowan, Randolph, and Stanly in the State.

"§ 153C-3. Uwharrie Regional Resources Commission.

(a) Creation. – The Uwharrie Regional Resources Commission is hereby established. The Commission is a permanent body corporate of the State composed of members from the Uwharrie region of North Carolina. The Commission shall be located administratively in the Department of Commerce but shall exercise its statutory powers and duties independently of the Department of Commerce. The Commission shall meet in the Uwharrie region of North Carolina. Funds appropriated for the Commission by the General Assembly shall be disbursed directly to the Commission at the beginning of each fiscal year.

(b) Purpose. – The purposes and functions of the Uwharrie Regional Resources Commission are to do all of the following:

- (1) Identify and evaluate issues affecting important resources of the region and recommend policies and programs to address those issues.
- (2) Coordinate with existing local and regional efforts to address threats to important regional resources and work undertaken by councils of government and the jurisdictions they serve in the Uwharrie region of North Carolina.
- (3) Provide a forum for discussion of issues affecting important regional resources.
- (4) Promote communication, coordination, and education among stakeholders within the Uwharrie region of North Carolina.